

Message Text

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY BRASILIA

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 150671

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: CGEN, PINT, US, BR

SUBJECT: FOREIGN MINISTRY QUESTIONS "POLITICAL" ROLE
OF U.S. CONSULAR OFFICERS.

REF: (A) BRASILIA 4240; (B) BRASILIA 4399

1. IT IS VERY DIFFICULT TO RESPOND TO FOREIGN MINISTRY'S
VAGUE ALLEGATIONS. ARAUJO COMPLAINED OF "POLITICAL"
ACTION BY CONSULS, BUT SEEMED UNABLE TO DEFINE THEM. TO
SAY THAT CALLING ON LEGISLATIVE PARTY CHIEFS ON THE FIRST
TRIP THROUGH HIS DISTRICT IS "POLITICAL," BUT THAT CALLS
ON SUBSEQUENT TRIPS ARE NOT "POLITICAL," MAKES NO SENSE.
FURTHERMORE, TO ALLEGE THAT DISTRIBUTION OF A SPEECH BY A
SENIOR U.S. GOVERNMENT OFFICIAL IS ALSO A "POLITICAL ACT"
OR THAT THE SPEECH ITSELF IS A "POLITICAL PUBLICATION" IS
EQUALLY ABSURD. IT APPEARS THAT ARAUJO'S BASIC PURPOSE
WAS TO EXHIBIT HIS PRINCIPALS' RESENTMENT OF ANY FOREIGN
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(U.S.) "POLITICAL" INFLUENCE ON THE BRAZILIAN POPULATION
AND SUGGESTS AN ATTEMPT TO INSULATE THE BRAZILIAN PEOPLE
FROM ALL OUTSIDE THOUGHT AND ATTITUDES. IT WOULD ALSO SEEM
TO REFLECT BOTH SENSITIVITY AND SUSPICION REGARDING USG
MOTIVES AND ACTIONS IN THIS PRE-ELECTION PERIOD.

2. DEPARTMENT IS SURPRISED AT THIS EXTREMELY NARROW INTER-

PRETATION WHICH BRAZILIAN FOREIGN MINISTRY SEEMS TO HAVE

GIVEN TO ARTICLE 5 OF VIENNA CONVENTION, AND AGREES
WITH EMBASSY'S PARA 5 REFTEL.

3. IT HAS BEEN TRADITIONAL PRACTICE FOR AMERICAN
CONSULAR OFFICERS -- AND WE BELIEVE CONSULAR OFFICIALS OF
VIRTUALLY ALL COUNTRIES -- TO PURSUE AND MAINTAIN WIDEST
RANGE OF CONTACTS IN ALL SECTORS IN ORDER TO CARRY OUT
THEIR FUNCTIONS UNDER ARTICLE 5. CLEARLY THE ACTIVITIES
OF MEMBERS OF POLITICAL SECTOR -- INCLUDING LEGISLATORS --
AFFECT ALL OTHER SECTORS IN WHICH CONSULAR OFFICERS HAVE
AN INTEREST. THE LAWS THEY PASS, THE OPINIONS THEY
EXPRESS, WILL HAVE SIGNIFICANT IMPACT ON ALL OTHER SECTORS.
IN ORDER TO CARRY OUT THEIR RESPONSIBILITIES, THEREFORE,
CONSULAR OFFICERS MUST AVAIL THEMSELVES OF OPPORTUNITIES
TO MEET AND DISCUSS WITH POLITICIANS THOSE FACETS OF THE
POLITICAL SCENE WHICH COULD AFFECT THEIR OTHER RESPONSI-
BILITIES UNDER ARTICLE 5. WE DO NOT BELIEVE ANY GOVERN-
MENT COULD ACCEPT LESS FREEDOM AS AN INFRINGEMENT OF THE
DUTIES OF ITS CONSULAR OFFICIALS UNDER ARTICLE 5.

4. IN THE SAME SPIRIT, THE BROAD TERMINOLOGY EMPLOYED IN
ARTICLE 5 SUGGESTS THAT IN ACTIVITIES OF A CULTURAL
NATURE, CONSULAR OFFICIALS, INCLUDING THE BPAO, WOULD BE
REMISS IF IN THE EXCHANGE OF CONTACTS SURROUNDING THIS
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ACTIVITY THEY DID NOT DISSEMINATE STATEMENTS BY U.S.
LEADERS SO THAT LOCAL OFFICIALS AND OTHER PERSONALITIES
WOULD BE BETTER INFORMED AND MORE UNDERSTANDING OF U.S.
POLICIES AND ATTITUDES AND THE EVENTS SURROUNDING THEM. CHRISTOPHER

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